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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— We have received a description, by Professor Alfred C. Haddon, of an apparatus for demonstrating systems of classification. What he proposes is very simple, merely consisting of a series of glass plates placed vertically over one another, leaving a small space between each, and a number of small movable blocks. The exact method for supporting the glass plates is of no consequence, and may be varied to any extent. The apparatus which he employs "consists of an oblong mahogany board, let into the corners of which are four brass sockets; into these are inserted four brass standards which are pierced with holes at regular intervals in such a manner that the holes in each end-standard are *vis à vis* with those of its fellow, and are at the same time parallel with those at the opposite end. Through these holes brass wires are inserted, and it is upon these that the glass plates rest. This apparatus has the advantage of being readily taken to pieces, and being quite portable. The names should be printed on paper, then cut out and pasted on two faces of oblong blocks of wood in such a manner that they can be read in a front view or by looking down vertically upon the apparatus. A makeshift may be constructed by bending a small oblong piece of cardboard roofwise and writing the name on one face of the anticlinal. The several blocks may be linked together in the same plane by pins placed either vertically or obliquely, and reaching to the upper glass plate. Any complicated system of linkage is thus possible.

"In a classification of recent forms, each plate might represent a stage of differentiation, and the arrangement of the forms on that superficies would indicate their inter-relationships. The lower planes would naturally be chosen for the less differentiated types. An area on each plane could always be made by a colored line to represent some special modification. Degraded animals might be tinted, and a black pin slanting from the higher to the degenerate form would graphically show that it was not an ascending type. Missing links between more or less widely separated living animals could be appropriately supplied by names within brackets.

"For phylogeny the arrangement would be somewhat similar except that each plate would represent some geological horizon, the name of which would be on a block placed in one corner. Every name in each geological epoch should be tinted in some distinctive color, so as to distinguish at a glance its precise horizon.

"The philosophical palæontologist arranges the names on each plane so as to indicate the relations of each animal to those preceding and succeeding it in time, as well as to its synchronous neighbors, and thus he gets a graphic view of the march of life; by looking from above down the vista of time he sees widely separated recent animals gradually converging till they all unite in some form which, if at present unknown, must once have existed; or, more accurately, diverging from such a common ancestor. It will also be made apparent that in every age there were forms which varied from the parent stem which lived for a longer or a shorter period and then became extinct.

" Very valuable museum demonstrations could be made by fitting up a comparatively large apparatus to the glass plates of which were cemented real fossils with their names. Ammonites and Brachiopods, for instance, are well fitted for this purpose. Affinities and variations would in this case be illustrated by the actual specimens, and so be vividly impressed upon the mind."—*Proc. Royal Dublin Society.*

— The Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club evinces its activity in promptly issuing its Transactions, Vol. II, No. I. The club has for four years maintained a strictly local character, and to this is ascribed whatever success it has attained. The subjects treated refer to the local flora of Ottawa, the sand plains of the Upper Ottawa, the fossils of Ottawa, edible and poisonous fungi, a list of the Coleoptera of Ottawa, and the deer of Ottawa valley, with reports of the different branches or sections into which the society is subdivided. If every city in America had such a local, enterprising society, and there are a few which have, what an increased interest in and respect for the study of nature would pervade our people! Its effects would be seen in our common schools; it would ameliorate the degrading materialism of our times, tone down the love of display and lavish expenditure in moneyed circles, and here and there give room for the growth and development of trained observers of nature.

— The records of the Society of Naturalists of the Eastern United States, vol. I, part I, Boston, 1884, contains the constitution and by-laws with a list of members; a copy of the original call for the organization of the society; with the records of the first meeting at Springfield, Mass., and the second meeting at New York, Dec. 27 and 28, 1883.

— A department of veterinary medicine and surgery has been recently established in connection with the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. R. S. Huidekoper has been placed in charge.

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PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, Philadelphia meeting, Sept. 4–11, 1884.

SECTION E—GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY.

The geological age, character and origin of the gypsum beds of Cayuga county, N. Y. S. G. Williams.

The correlation of the lower coal measures of Ohio and Eastern Kentucky. Edward Orton.

On a section of the strata of Cretaceous and Tertiary formations of Alabama. Eugene A. Smith and L. C. Johnson.